

ANNOUNCEMENT

Office of Early Childhood Contracts with United Way to Create Statewide Infrastructure and Consolidate Quality Improvement Initiatives

*Connecticut takes a key step in building a coordinated, statewide support program
for home, center and school-based care*

HARTFORD (March 16, 2016) – [The Connecticut Office of Early Childhood](#) (OEC) announced today that it is contracting with [United Way Of Connecticut, Inc.](#) as part of OEC's planned fall launch of an integrated and unified quality improvement system to support early care and education programs and professionals. The system is designed to gain efficiency and channel existing siloes of funds into a coordinated statewide quality improvement program.

"As a critical next step in developing the system, we are working with United Way of Connecticut to begin building a unified infrastructure to support programs and staff," says Connecticut Office of Early Childhood Commissioner Myra Jones-Taylor, Ph.D.

"Moving from the current patchwork structure and creating a single system is a complex and long-term process. By weaving together existing resources, we will improve quality and provide support to more early care and education providers without increasing costs. We selected United Way of Connecticut based on its role as our state's Child Care Resource and Referral Agency, its technology infrastructure and existing statewide operations," the Commissioner says.

The Office of Early Childhood will reallocate existing funds to support early care and education providers to foster safe, supportive environments for children and families while incorporating best practices in teaching and learning.

National experts at the BUILD Initiative, an organization designed to help states develop an early childhood system, [advise](#) using Child Care Resource and Referral agencies such as United Way of Connecticut's Child Care 211 as a best practice for building quality improvement systems. They report that states that have not done so have created duplicate investments especially in the area of data collection and analytics.

As part of the contract, United Way of Connecticut will:



- Work with many partners to make available quality improvement training, coaching and technical assistance to early care and education programs statewide, including family childcare providers, centers and school-based settings
- Recruit, track and support trainers, coaches and consultants to work together to help programs meet quality improvement goals and requirements
- Communicate about the system and services to the early care and education community

“Connecticut organizations, consultants, and trainers have a wealth of knowledge on how to help early care and education programs and staff serve families and children better,” says the Commissioner. “Our quality improvement system will incorporate and build on the strengths already in our state and focus existing funds to fill gaps.” Once the statewide program is fully implemented:

- More families will have peace of mind knowing that their children are cared for by well-trained staff in high-quality settings
- More early care and education providers will have access to free and low-cost trainings, coaching and consultation to improve the quality while meeting Child Care Development Fund (CCDF), licensure, and Accreditation requirements
- More types of settings will be able to access support including home-based, school-based, and center-based early care and education settings, including those that are privately funded
- There will be more alignment and efficiency thereby reducing administrative costs so that more programs receive quality support from the state
- More of Connecticut’s youngest children will be cared for in high-quality settings that are able to meet their unique and developing needs

Further, OEC will form a Continuous Quality Improvement committee with representatives from early care and education programs, families, trainers and consultants, and partners across the state to help the agency refine system policies and the quality of support delivered over time.

General Questions: For general questions about the contract or the Quality Improvement System, please contact Mary Farnsworth at mary.farnsworth@ct.gov